

The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts
Expansion

National Capital Planning Commission
Submission for March 5, 2015 Meeting
Project Report

In his final State of the Union address, President Kennedy said “to further the appreciation of culture among all the people...to increase respect for the creative individual, to widen participation by all the processes and fulfillments of art—this is one of the fascinating challenges of these days.” As the living memorial that bears his name, the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts seeks to fulfill this vital mission by presenting and producing the best of the arts, supporting the creation of new works, and providing innovative and comprehensive arts education to millions of people across the country.

The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts is proposing to expand the existing Edward Durell Stone building to provide approximately 65,000 square feet of additional space. As the institution enters its fifth decade, this expansion will allow the Center to continue to play a national and global leadership role in providing opportunities for enhanced engagement and interaction with the arts while providing much-needed rehearsal, education, and public access areas in the decades to come.

Purpose of and Need for the Project

The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts (Kennedy Center) is proposing to expand the existing Edward Durell Stone building to provide approximately 65,000 square feet of additional space for classrooms, rehearsal rooms, event spaces, and meeting rooms. In addition, the Kennedy Center is looking at ways to improve visitor access to and from the Kennedy Center, the National Mall and Memorial Parks (NAMA), the Rock Creek Paved Recreation Trail, the Potomac River waterfront, and surrounding areas. The purpose of the proposed project is to expand the Kennedy Center’s existing facilities by adding additional classrooms, rehearsal rooms, event spaces, and meeting space adjacent to the Kennedy Center as well as providing an innovative performance space and café on a floating, permanently moored River Pavilion located on the Potomac River. Additionally, the Kennedy Center envisions improving greater multimodal access to and from the Kennedy Center, NAMA, the Rock Creek Paved Recreation Trail, the Potomac River waterfront, and surrounding vicinity.

The project is needed because the Kennedy Center currently has no dedicated classrooms, a limited number of rehearsal rooms, and no dedicated event space. The Kennedy Center offers more than 30 different educational programs in the areas of performance, teaching and learning, partnerships, and career development for young artists. However, with no dedicated facilities, these programs are currently conducted in make-shift spaces designed for other purposes. Multifunctional rooms, such as the Atrium and Foyers, conference rooms, hallways and rehearsal rooms, currently serve as event space,

classrooms, exhibition space, and circulation and storage areas. Providing 65,000 square feet of additional space on-site for dedicated classrooms, additional large rehearsal rooms, and alternate spaces for special events would free up spaces in the main building for more suitable uses.

In addition, there is no direct and convenient pedestrian access between the Kennedy Center and Rock Creek Paved Recreation Trail, NAMA, and the Potomac River waterfront. The only bike/pedestrian access from the Potomac riverfront to the Kennedy Center is provided by a series of crosswalks across F Street NW and the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway, approximately 0.25 miles north of the south parking garage. This lack of a direct connection not only limits visitors' access to National Park Service and Kennedy Center amenities, but also creates a disconnect between the Kennedy Center, which is the United States' living memorial to President John F. Kennedy, and the other presidential memorials found within the National Mall. These include: the Washington Monument National Memorial; Thomas Jefferson Memorial National Memorial; Lincoln Memorial National Memorial; and Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial National Memorial. Creating a more convenient and logical pedestrian connection would benefit visitors to the Kennedy Center, NAMA, the Rock Creek Paved Recreation Trail, the Potomac River waterfront, as well as pedestrians using the Theodore Roosevelt Memorial Bridge, which connects to Theodore Roosevelt Island. Such a connection would also expand interpretation opportunities of the area's presidential memorials.

Kennedy Center Project Manager:

Kathy Kruse
Vice President, Institutional Affairs
2700 F St. NW
Washington DC 20566
202 416-8703
KKruse@Kennedy-Center.org

Description of the Project

The Kennedy Center is located at 2700 F Street NW in Washington, DC at the intersection of New Hampshire Avenue NW and the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway. The expansion will be to the south of the existing Kennedy Center building. The project area is located between the south façade of the Kennedy Center's existing building and Interstate 66/U.S. Route 50 (the Theodore Roosevelt Memorial Bridge) and will extend across Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway into the Potomac River. The existing conditions of this area are a surface parking area for buses and oversized vehicles, entrances to the Kennedy Center garage and some landscaping consisting of shrubs, grasses and trees. (See slides 2 – 7 of the Power Point presentation.)

The expansion, as designed by Steven Holl Architects, will include the construction of two land-based pavilions, connected below grade. These pavilions will be the site for rehearsal spaces, classrooms, a lecture hall, and multipurpose spaces. The South Terrace will be redesigned to remove a section of the concrete perimeter wall to incorporate the area into a landscaped area, including a reflecting pool. The third pavilion, with a total footprint of 8,420 square feet, will float on the Potomac River. Access to the river pavilion will be provided by a pedestrian crossing from the Rock Creek Paved Recreation Trail and a

single bridge crossing over Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway to connect the Kennedy Center site to the river pavilion. The river pavilion, with an interior space (enclosed programmed space) of approximately 4,920 square feet, will provide an opportunity to expand upon and improve the memorialization of President Kennedy and his significant contribution to the arts and American culture, as well as a participatory, interactive space for small-scale performances.

The landscaped area will cover subgrade parking and the south garage entrances. These open and inviting gardens will provide intimate gathering spaces, as well as a lawn area for viewing performances simulcast from within the Kennedy Center.

Total Area of the Site and Allocation of Land

The site affected by the project is 4.6 acres

Area of Building and Site Coverage

The expansion on the Kennedy Center site is approximately 65,000 gross square feet, comprised of the following:

- Lower level: 31,643 GSF

- Upper level: 28,794 GSF

- Terrace level: 563 GSF

In addition, the following additional space is provided:

- Subgrade parking: 38,106 GSF

- Garage access roads: 13,853 GSF

- Landscape/Gardens: 182,717 SF

The footprints of the two land-based pavilions are:

- Entry pavilion footprint: 3,262 SF

- Glissando pavilion footprint: 6,158 SF

The river pavilion is 4,920 GSF and has a footprint of 8,420 SF.

Existing employment and projected employment

The Kennedy Center currently employs approximately 1,300 people, of which 580 are full time. Employment is not projected to change markedly with the expansion over the next 20 years.

Relationship of the Project to the Kennedy Center's Master Plan

The Kennedy Center does not have a master plan. However, in advance of undertaking this project, a feasibility study was conducted to explore the viability of expanding the facility within the boundaries of the Center's site. The feasibility study concluded that the location of the existing parking garage south of and contiguous with the original Edward Durell Stone building was the best option for the building expansion.

Coordination with Affected Local and State Governments

Representatives from the Kennedy Center have met with the National Park Service (NPS), the Commission of Fine Arts (CFA) and the National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC) on numerous occasions to solicit input on the design criteria and alternatives for this project. The Kennedy Center presented preliminary concepts in July 2013 to the Commission of Fine Arts and in September 2013 to the National Capital Planning Commission. The concept plans for the project were approved by CFA on January 16, 2014 and by NCPC on February 6, 2014. NCPC approved the two land-based pavilions on December 4, 2014, but did not approve the proposed River Pavilion, requesting that the Kennedy Center conduct additional analysis on the impacts of the River Pavilion and submit the results to the Commission prior to final review.

The Kennedy Center has coordinated with the NPS and the NCPC in the preparation of an Environmental Assessment to identify alternatives and assess the potential impacts of the proposed project, in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The Environmental Assessment was made available for public review and comment from October 9, 2014 through November 10, 2014. A public meeting was held on October 22, 2014 at the Kennedy Center. The Kennedy Center, in coordination with the NPS has finalized a Finding of No Significant Impact for the project.

In accordance with Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act, consultation letters were sent to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) and District Department of the Environment on August 30, 2013. In a letter dated November 13, 2013, the USFWS stated that “except for occasional transient individuals, no proposed or federal listed species are known to exist within the project impact area.” The NMFS responded on September 10, 2013. NMFS commented that there are two known sturgeon species known to exist within the project area and that NPS and NCPC is responsible for determining whether the proposed action is likely to affect these species. The NPS and NCPC sent additional correspondence to the NMFS on January 15, 2014 which stated that based on the unlikely potential for occurrence of sturgeon in the project area during construction, the nature of the proposed activities, and the implementation of conservation measures to exclude sturgeons from the project area, the expansion of the Kennedy Center is not likely to adversely affect the federally endangered shortnose or Atlantic sturgeon. Because with mitigation, the sturgeon would not be adversely affected, consultation with the NMFS under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act has concluded.

The proposed project area is located within the 100-year floodplain and a Floodplain Statement of Findings (SOF) was prepared pursuant to NPS Director’s Order 77-2: Floodplain Management. Based upon the findings in the SOF, the selected alternative will create additional obstructions within the floodplain; however, the obstructions will not noticeably impact the water surface level during a flood event. A slight decrease in the capacity of the floodplain to store floodwaters will occur, as well as a slight decrease in infiltration. However, due to the limited capacity of the floodplain in its current condition, these alterations will not result in a measurable adverse impact. The addition of structures under the selected alternative will result in very little change to the ability of the floodplain to convey floodwaters and will not contribute to flooding. The selected alternative will not increase the risk associated with flooding for the 100-year event.

Concurrently, consultation is being conducted in accordance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. In coordination with NEPA, consultation under Section 106 was initiated with the DC Historic Preservation Office (DC HPO) on July 12, 2013. A joint NEPA/Section 106 scoping meeting was held on July 22, 2013 during which the consulting parties were introduced to the project, presented with a draft Area of Potential Effect, and invited to comment on the proposal. A 30-day public comment period was open from July 15 to August 30, 2013. A second consulting parties meeting occurred on September 17, 2013, to present the proposed alternatives to the public, invite comment on the potential effects of the undertaking, and solicit input into ways to avoid, minimize, or mitigate adverse effects. A 14-day public comment period was open from September 20 – October 4, 2013. The NPS's PEPC website was used as a tool to disseminate information on the project and collect public comment. A third consulting party meeting was held on August 14, 2014 to present the effects of the proposed undertaking to the consulting parties. Additionally, given that Indian tribes may have interest in this geographic location, on October 28, 2013 the Delaware Nation was invited to participate in Section 106 consultation for the project. NPS, NCPC, and the Kennedy Center met with the Delaware Nation on November 25, 2013 and submitted to them a Phase IA archaeological report on May 7, 2014. The Delaware Nation concluded on October 24, 2014 that the proposed project is not in the "area of interest" for the Delaware Nation. The Kennedy Center, NCPC, and the NPS have coordinated the findings of the EA with the DC HPO in accordance with Section 106 of the NHPA through the preparation of an Assessments of Effects Report. A Memorandum of Agreement detailing the necessary mitigation and minimization measures has been completed and signed by the NPS, NCPC, the DC SHPO and the Kennedy Center, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers on January 23, 2015.

On March 14, 2013, the Kennedy Center initiated consultation with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. In a letter dated April 10, 2013, the Corps stated a permit application would need to be submitted to the Corps pursuant to Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act and/or Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. On September 12, 2013 the Kennedy Center met with the Corps and presented the methods for anchoring the river pavilion. The Corps is expected to provide a formal determination on their decision to issue permits once they receive the permit application, which will follow completion of the NEPA process. A joint permit application was submitted to the Corps on September 26, 2014 for river borings. The Corps requested additional information on the JPA on October 7, 2014 and the information was provided to the Corps on October 15, 2014. The Corps has issued a Nationwide Permit on December 29, 2014 authorizing the river borings work. The District Department of the Environment issued a Water Quality Certification on January 29, 2014 authorizing the river borings work. A separate JPA will be submitted to the Corps for the construction of the river pavilion.

On July 2, 2013, the Kennedy Center sent a scoping letter to the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) to discuss the need for obstruction lights for the river pavilion and any additional requirements of the USCG. On October 29, 2013, the USCG provided a preliminary response via electronic mail which stated that based upon the information provided to them, the USCG would require each end of the river pavilion to be marked with day/night obstruction marks. A formal response will be provided by the USCG in response to the permitting package once submitted to the Corps.

Prior to the implementation of the project, the Kennedy Center will obtain appropriate land disturbance permits and abide by local and state erosion and sediment control standards, as well as any additional approvals and reviews required prior to construction. These include approval by NCPC and CFA, a Section 10 permit under the Rivers and Harbors Act, and/or a Section 404 permit under the Clean Water Act.

Prior to implementation of the project, pursuant to 40 USC § 8124, the NPS will need to transfer jurisdiction of a portion of NPS administered property and certain air rights to the Kennedy Center. Air rights over the parkway (approximately 805 square feet) will be needed for the pedestrian bridge and would require a jurisdictional transfer from NPS (40 U.S. Code § 8124). In addition, a jurisdictional transfer will be needed for the one support pier for the bridge on NPS property (approximately 5 to 10 square feet). The pedestrian connection (covering approximately 350 square feet of land) from the river pavilion to the existing Rock Creek Paved Recreation Trail will require a construction permit from NPS. A right-of-way permit will be required in order to bore under Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway for the installation of utility lines to the river pavilion.

Status of Community Participation

A Public Scoping Period took place from July 15 through August 30, 2013. Advertisements were placed in the Washington Post (July 12, 2013) and Current (July 17, 2013) newspapers to announce the project and public scoping period as well as invite the public to attend an open house scoping meeting on July 22, 2013. On July 12, 2013, an email announcement and letter regarding the Scoping Period and meeting were distributed by the NPS and the NCPC to area interest groups and individual parties. In addition, a press release was issued on the Kennedy Center website and project information was posted on the National Park Service PEPC website. Members of the public were invited to submit comments on the project electronically, through the National Park Service PEPC website and by mailing written comments. The July 22, 2013 public scoping meeting provided a forum to present the project and provide an overview of the NEPA and NHPA processes. Comment forms were available to the public for written comments.

A total of 14 individuals signed in at the public scoping meeting. Five comments were received during the scoping period. These individuals were in support of the project moving forward. One commenter expressed the need for noise control during construction activities and that senior citizen access should be included in project design. Also, the commenter requested that the project design not impinge on the views of the District's scenery from nearby apartments. A second comment indicated that the proposed actions should include pedestrian and cycling access improvements to connect the Kennedy Center with other destinations, such as Georgetown. It was also suggested that an advisory committee of citizens be formed to discuss public needs associated with the Kennedy Center area. The third individual indicated that the Kennedy Center should be developed in a manner consistent with expansion of its surroundings; specifically, development should be coordinated with future reconfiguration of the Roosevelt Bridge. A fourth commenter suggested the use of existing terrace space for the expansion. Also, the first correspondence emphasized the need for a design that matches the existing architectural quality of the Kennedy Center. The final commenter called for an analysis of impacts to parking, transit and traffic resulting from the expansion project in the EA. Along with the purpose and need for the project these considerations and concerns guided the development of alternatives and contributed to the selection of impact topics identified in the EA.

In addition to public participation through the scoping process associated with the EA, the preliminary design concept for the project was presented to the ANC on May 15, 2013. It was well received at that meeting with no specific comments.

The EA was made available for public review and comment from October 9, 2014 through November 10, 2014. The EA was also placed on the NPS's PEPC website and a press release was issued on the Kennedy

Center website. A public meeting, advertised in The Washington Post (October 9, 2014), was held on October 22, 2014 at the Kennedy Center. The public meeting provided a forum for the project team to display the results of the EA as well as the different project alternatives. A total of 17 individuals signed in at the public meeting. During the public comment period, the NPS, NCPC, and the Kennedy Center received 8 pieces of correspondence from the public, 5 correspondences from organizations, and 4 correspondences from agencies commenting on the proposed action. A copy of the comments and responses to the comments is provided with the Finding of No Significant Impact signed by the NPS.

Schedule for Construction and Occupancy

In the preliminary schedule, construction demolition is expected to begin in March 2015, with a construction period of approximately two and a half years. Occupancy is preliminarily scheduled for mid-2017.

Total Estimated Cost and Funding

The total estimated cost for the project, including hard and soft costs, is \$100 million. The project will be fully funded with private funds; no Federal funds will be used for the project.

Transportation Management Program

Because the employment level will not change as a result of this project a Transportation Management Program has not been prepared.